KuneKune Pigs: A Hardy Homestead Breed

The Amazing Grazing Pigs for Small-Scale Farming Operations

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Kathy Petersen – KuneKune pigs are making their way into small-scale farming operations across the country. You may ask yourself what makes these pigs so special … the simple answer is everything! This breed is extremely friendly, docile, and easy to handle. First-time pig farmers are just amazed at how easy they truly are.

If you're looking to start free-range pig farming, look no further than KuneKune pigs. They are easy on the environment and prefer grass instead of rooting up the earth. They are made to graze with a short snout, unlike other breeds making them very efficient grazing machines. The fact that they do not require much in the way of supplementary grains makes them very cost-effective as well.

The pork that they produce is a succulent red marbled meat, locked in a layer of fat around it keeping it juicy and locking in the flavor. Sure, they are slower to mature, but if you're raising pigs for meat, their pork is so worth the wait. From bacon to BBQ, feeding your family from the KuneKune pigs that you raise yourself gives you a great sense of pride.

Want to raise Pigs? Raise KuneKune!

The AKKPS is the first KuneKune organization structured as a non profit in the USA, and is member governed. We are committed to the preservation and promotion of purebred, pedigreed, and DNA verified KuneKunes. The AKKPS promotes this delightful breed of heritage, grazing swine for all their many purposes.

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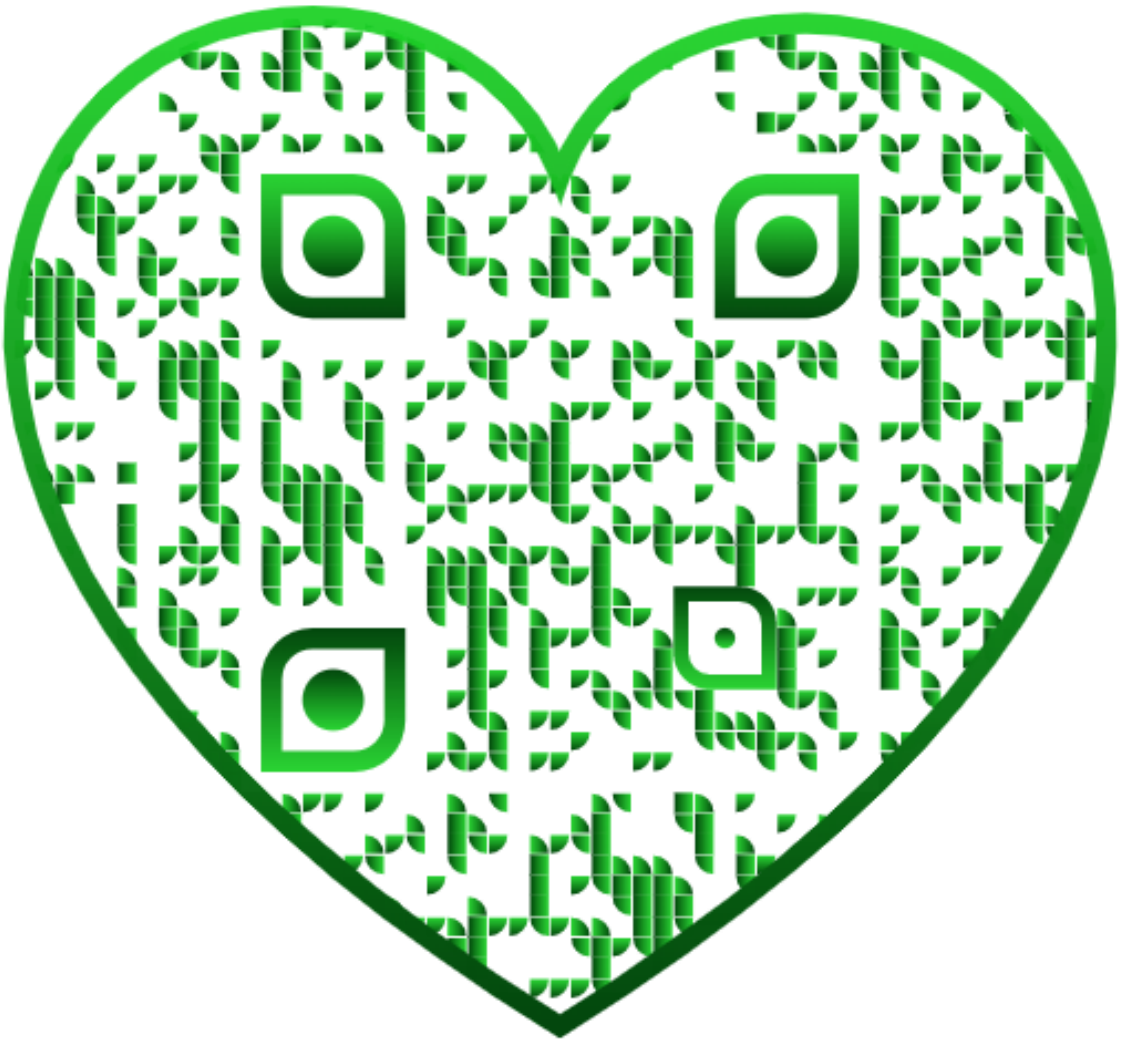
This is a breed to teach your children with. Mothers are very prolific and allow the entire family to interact with the babies from birth to weaning. Getting the kids into farming and out of electronics is always a plus. Children can learn so much about life from interactions with KuneKune pigs and you don't have to worry about them being chased through the pastures.
Here are some other facts about this incredible breed:

Temperament

KuneKune pigs are very easy-going and social creatures. They will run to greet you when they hear you come to the pastures. They enjoy human interaction and will plop for a belly rub at a moment's notice. They are fantastic with chickens, ducks, goats, cats, and dogs. Children are delighted to hear them "speak" to you during feeding time.



Breed Characteristic

Unlike most other breeds, KuneKune pigs have wattles. They are called Piri Piri in their original land of New Zealand. These are similar to goat wattles and hang just under the jowl. They are born with and without wattles. The inheritance of these wattles appears to have no rhyme or reason. You can mate two double-wattled Kunes and get both double-wattled and unwattled offspring. You can mate two unwattled Kunes together and get double-wattled animals.

Climates

KuneKune pigs are very hardy little pigs and fair quite well in most climates. In the low winter temperatures, mature pigs just need draft-free housing and bedding to stay warm. In the summer months, it is vital for them to have a mud puddle to cool off in, keep the biting insects off, and prevent sunburn.

Size

KuneKune pigs are mid-size pigs weighing 200-400 pounds (boars would be on the higher end and females on the lower end) and 24-36 inches tall. This is usually about to your knee. (Of course, this can vary depending on how much you feed them.) Kune Kune means“fat and round” in the Maori language and that is exactly what they are!

Feeding

KuneKune pigs primarily graze “for a living” which makes them a great pig breed for the homestead. You can feed your KuneKune pigs on pasture if you have a nice rich pasture year-round. It is recommended that you give some grain during the growing years. However, they only get about two cups twice a day. You may need to supplement in the winter with alfalfa hay and/or alfalfa pellets and a mini pig pellet food such as Blue Seal Pig & Sow, Purina Complete Pig and Sow food, or Purina Nature’s Match. The feed can be found at your local feed and seed store or a local Tractor Supply. This breed requires a lower protein level of about 16%.

Pigs also enjoy a variety of fruits and vegetables. You can give them the surplus from your gardens. They would be delighted to assist with cleaning out your garden for you at the end of the year as well. Maybe you have an orchard … they will make sure no fruit stays on the ground for long. If you do fodder (hydroponic barley or wheat) for other livestock, the KuneKune pigs will also enjoy a nice daily feeding of that.

Housing

The main thing with KuneKune pigs is having a warm hay or straw bedded house in the winter months that is draft-free. It can be an elaborate house or a simple calf hut. Whatever suits your budget.

Colors

KuneKune pigs come in a variety of colors; ginger/black, black/ginger, ginger, cream, black/white, brown/white, and more. The combinations give them a very distinct look and sets them apart from other breeders.

I hope that you have enjoyed your introduction to this amazing grazing animal called KuneKune pigs.

Do you raise pigs? What are your favorite breeds and why? We'd loved to hear from you!

Happy Farming!

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One thought on "KuneKune Pigs: A Hardy Homestead Breed"

Lotta says:

November 19, 2019 at 3:48 pm

HI, I just recently started raising Mangalitsa pigs and they are just as friendly as you described the Kune-Kune's to be. They will grow substantially bigger though! We are completely in love with our pigs, and have to work at outsmarting them! I never knew keeping pigs would be so much fun and am fascinated by learning more about all the other breeds as well. I enjoyed reading about the Kune-Kune pigs, wish I had more room at our place!

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